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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



RECEPTION

OF

MR. WEBSTER AT BOSTON,

SEPTEMBER 30, 1842.

WITH HIS SPEECH,

DELIVERED IN FANEUIL HALL ON THAT OCCASION.

BOSTON:

SAMUEL N. DICKINSON, PRINTER.

1842.

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MR. ^{Daniel C.} WEBSTER AT BOSTON,
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CORRESPONDENCE.

TO THE HON. DANIEL WEBSTER:

Sir.—The undersigned, desirous of evincing their gratitude for your eminent and patriotic public services, during a long term of years, and especially for the part sustained by you in the late negotiations which have been so skilfully conducted and happily terminated in a Treaty with Great Britain, invite you to meet them at a Public Dinner, at such time as shall be convenient to yourself.

H. G. OTIS,	EBEN. CHADWICK,	SIDNEY BARTLETT,
J. MASON,	ROB'T HOOPER, JR.	SEWELL TAPPAN,
WILLIAM STURGIS,	SAMUEL QUINCY,	SAMUEL L. ABBOT,
JOSIAH BRADLEE,	OZIAS GOODWIN,	JOSEPH BALLISTER,
CHAS. G. LORING,	JOS. RUSSELL,	HENRY D. GRAY,
CHAS. P. CURTIS,	JACOB BIGELOW,	GEO. B. CARY,
WM. APPLETON,	JONA. CHAPMAN,	NATHAN HALE,
ABBOTT LAWRENCE	G. R. RUSSELL,	J. M. FORBES,
N. APPLETON,	H. WAINWRIGHT,	S. HOOPER,
P. T. JACKSON,	FRANCIS FISHER,	GEO. HOWE,
JOSEPH BALCH,	JOHN S. BLAKE,	W. H. GARDINER,
JAMES K. MILLS,	F. C. GRAY,	J. H. WOLCOTT,
F. SKINNER,	B. R. CURTIS,	DANIEL C. BACON,
J. T. STEVENSON,	LEMUEL SHAW,	J. DAVIS, JR.,
HENRY CABOT,	THOS. B. WALES,	W. C. AYLWIN,
P. C. BROOKS,	GEO. MOREY,	F. DEXTER,
ROBERT G. SHAW,	C. W. CARTWRIGHT,	ISAAC LIVERMORE,
BENJ. RICH,	E. BALDWIN,	THOS. KINNICUTT,
PHINEAS SPRAGUE,	HORACE SCUDDER,	EDM. DWIGHT,
HENRY OXNARD,	FRANCIS WELCH,	JOHN P. ROBINSON,
J. I. BOWDITH,	JNO. L. DIMMOCK,	HENRY WILSON,
S. AUSTIN, JR.	FRANCIS C. LOWELL,	GEO. T. CURTIS,
J. T. BUCKINGHAM,	CALEB CURTIS,	GEO. T. BIGELOW,
THOS. B. CURTIS,	GEO. HAYWARD,	WM. W. GREENOUGH,
ABEL PHELPS.	AMOS LAWRENCE,	THOS. LAMB,
PETER HARVEY,	GEO. DARRACOTT,	JOSEPH GRINNELL.

Boston, September 8, 1842.

BOSTON, SEPTEMBER 9, 1842.

GENTLEMEN.—I have received your letter of the 8th instant, inviting me to a public dinner, and am duly sensible of the value of this proof of your regard.

It will give me great pleasure to meet all my fellow citizens, who may desire to see me; and the mode of such meeting I should leave to them, with a preference, however, on my part, if equally agreeable to others, that the dinner should be dispensed with, and that the meeting should be had in such a manner as shall impose the least restrictions, and best suit the convenience of all who may be disposed to attend it. I am, gentlemen, with very sincere regard,

Your obliged fellow citizen, and obedient servant,

DANIEL WEBSTER.

To Messrs. H. G. OTIS, J. MASON, WILLIAM STURGIS, JOSIAH BRADLEE, CHAS. G. LORING, CHARLES P. CURTIS, WILLIAM APPLETON, ABBOTT LAWRENCE, and others.

RECEPTION OF MR. WEBSTER.

SOME time before the hour appointed for the reception of Mr. WEBSTER, on Friday morning, Faneuil Hall was filled with our citizens. Very many of our distinguished citizens came at an early hour, to make sure of admission to the Hall, and it was rapidly filled to the full extent of its capacity, and great numbers were obliged to turn away without being able to come within the doors.

Just before eleven o'clock, His Honor JONATHAN CHAPMAN, Mayor of the City, rose and said that the meeting on this occasion had been appointed at eleven o'clock, and that he had received a letter from a committee of those gentlemen who had extended the invitation to Mr. Webster, requesting him to preside. This he had consented to do, unless objection should be made. (Applause.) He would simply say, then, that the committee would bring Mr. Webster in precisely at eleven o'clock.

Amid the applause that followed this information, Mr. WEBSTER, with the committee of his friends, entered the hall amid tremendous and continued cheering. Mr. Chapman led him forward upon the platform, and after the assembly had given nine hearty cheers, addressed its guest as follows.—*Boston Daily Advertiser, Oct. 1, 1842.*

THE MAYOR'S ADDRESS.

MR. WEBSTER:—I have the honor, Sir, to be the organ of this large assembly of your former constituents, and still fellow citizens and friends, who have gathered to greet you with a cordial welcome, upon your visit to what we are proud to call, and trust you will always feel to be—your home. We sought to meet

you at a social festival; but it has taken the present far better form, at your own request. The pointed meaning, however, of the occasion is unchanged. Believing that as a true republican, you will find the richest reward of your public services in the respect and gratitude of those whom you serve, we would assure you in the most emphatic manner, that so far as your friends here are concerned, you have them from the heart. We would assure you, that though your duties, at your country's call, have separated you from us for a season, you are not forgotten,—but that wherever your destiny may place you, so long, as in time past, you shall be nobly defending your country's Constitution, and maintaining untarnished her honor, there will be living and beating hearts here, in which you will ever be enshrined.

A large portion, Sir, of your mature life has been spent in the public service,—and of that portion, a great part as the immediate representative of this city and Commonwealth. We rejoice in this opportunity to testify to you, that your long and eminent services in our behalf, are still held in most grateful remembrance. We acknowledge our deep obligations to you, for your unwavering fidelity to our interests—for your able support of that cause of American industry, whose protection has so distinguished the recent session of Congress, and for the broad and comprehensive spirit in which your legislative duties were ever discharged. Bright, Sir, ever bright will be the page of history which records the efforts of your commanding intellect in the councils of the nation. And New England—glorious New England—your birth-place and your home—whose heart, you know, is warm, though her skies be cold—New England, from every summit of her granite hills, will never cease to hail you as her worthy representative.

We parted with you with regret indeed, but still with ready acquiescence in the wise judgment of that good old man, who,—himself placed in the Presidential chair, amidst a people's acclamations,—from amongst the bright lights of this broad land, selected you to stand at his right hand. It pleased a wise but inscrutable Providence, too soon, alas! to mortal eyes, to remove him from his elevated seat on earth to, we trust, a higher one above. But nobly, Sir, have you sustained the momentous in-

terests, which in a most critical period of the country's history, he committed to your charge. No sound, indeed, of his glad voice shall ever again greet your ear. But we feel that his benignant spirit has been, and will still be near to bless you, and approve the loud "well done," with which every true patriot must salute you.

It is to your eminent services, Sir, on this broader field which you have lately occupied, that we look this day with special pride and admiration. Sir, in simple but heartfelt language, we thank you for the honorable attitude, in which, so far as your department has been concerned, you have placed your country before the world. Would to God that it stood as well in other respects! In the many emergencies in our foreign relations, which the two past years have presented, you have been faithful throughout to the true interests and honor of the country, and nowhere in its archives can abler, manlier, wiser or more dignified papers be found, than those which bear your signature.

When the dark cloud lowered upon our neighboring frontier, — when a great and fundamental law of nations had well nigh yielded to popular passion, — when a single step only intervened between us and a war, that must have been disastrous, as it would have found us in the wrong, — it was your wise and energetic interference that dispelled the storm, by seeking to make us just even under galling provocation.

When a gasconading upstart from a neighboring republic, so called, presumed to address to this government a communication worthy only of his own, but which no one of his coadjutors was bold enough to present in person, — one firm and dignified look from our own Secretary of State, a single sweep of his powerful arm, relieved the country from any further specimens of Mexican diplomacy.

And, crowning act of all, when amidst the numerous and perplexing questions, which had so long disturbed the harmony of two nations whom God meant should always be friends, England sent forth her ambassador of compromise and peace, you met him like a man. Subtle diplomacy and political legerdemain you threw to the winds, and taking only for your guides, simple honesty, common sense, and a christian spirit, behold! by

their magic influence, there is not a cloud in the common heavens above us, but only the glad and cheering sunlight of friendship and peace.

We have already, Sir, on this same spot, expressed our satisfaction with this treaty with England, while paying a merited tribute of respect to the distinguished representative of that country, who was associated with you in its adjustment. We repeat to you our satisfaction with the result, and with the magnanimous spirit by which it was accomplished. We may add now, as we might not then, that we know not the other individual within the limits of the country, who could have so successfully achieved this happy event.

We are aware, Sir, that this treaty is not yet completed, but that an important act is yet necessary for its accomplishment. We anticipate no such result, and yet it may be that still further work may be necessary for the crowning of our hopes. You have brought skill and labor,—ay, and self-sacrifice too,—to this great work, we know. And whatever may befall the country, in this or any other matter, we are sure that you will be ready to sacrifice every thing for her good, save honor. And on that point, amidst the perplexities of these perplexing times, we shall be at ease; for we know that he who has so nobly maintained his country's honor, may safely be intrusted with his own.

And permit us, Sir, most warmly to greet you as our personal friend and fellow-citizen. Though the few and brief intervals of leisure which your public duties have permitted you, have allowed us far less intercourse with you in private life than we have wished, we have never ceased to feel that you were one of us. We rejoice in the kind Providence which has been with you in the past, and may Heaven still smile upon your future years. Long may you live to be an ornament and support of your native republic. And when at last your sun goes down,—as every orb, the brightest even, must set,—may it be from a serene and tranquil sky. It was bright at its rising; it is brilliant at its meridian. May no clouds gather around its departing; but, life's labors done and honors won, may it,—in your

own classical and beautiful words,—may it go down with
“slow descending, long lingering light.”

And now, fellow-citizens, it would be the idlest ceremony in the world, to presume to introduce to you our distinguished guest. It was his privilege, upon the occasion of an important trial in the Supreme Court of this commonwealth, a few years since, to introduce to that Court, and to the bar, the late lamented William Wirt, his opposing counsel in the cause. He did it by a just and beautiful tribute to his eminent talents and worth. It was the no less just and beautiful reply of Mr. Wirt, when he rose in turn to address the Court, that he had one reason to regret the very kind introduction which he had just received; for his friend, Mr. Webster, had thereby placed him under an obligation which it never would be in his power to return,—for he never could meet that gentlemen at any bar in the United States where his name and his fame had not gone before him.

And here, fellow-citizens, in Boston,—here, in Faneuil Hall, last place of all,—and amongst you, last people of all, is such a ceremony needed. I have only to say, that DANIEL WEBSTER, the faithful representative, the manly and able statesman, your fellow-citizen and friend, is before you, and I leave his name to do the rest.

MR. WEBSTER'S SPEECH.

MR. WEBSTER then stepped forward and said:

I know not how it is, Mr. Mayor, but there is something in the echoes of these walls, or in this sea of upturned faces which I behold before me, or in the genius that always hovers over this place, fanning ardent and patriotic feeling by every motion of its wings.—I know not how it is, but there is something that excites me strangely, deeply, before I even began to speak. It cannot be doubted that this salutation and greeting from my fellow citizens of Boston, is a tribute dear to my heart. Boston is indeed my home, my cherished home. It is now more than twenty-five years since I came to it with my family to pursue, here in this enlightened metropolis, those objects of professional life for which my studies and education were designed to fit me. It is twenty years since I was invited by the citizens of Boston

to take upon myself an office of public trust in their service. It gives me infinite pleasure to see here, to-day, among those who hold the seats yielded to such as are more advanced in life, not a few of the gentlemen who were earnestly instrumental in inducing me to enter upon a course of life wholly unexpected, and to devote myself to the service of the public.

Whenever the duties of public life have withdrawn me from this home, I have felt it, nevertheless, to be the attractive spot to which all local affection tended. And now that the progress of time must shortly bring about the period, if it should not be hastened by the progress of events, when the duties of public life shall yield to the influences of advancing years, I cherish no hope more precious, than to pass here in these associations and among these friends, what may remain to me of life; and to leave in the midst of you, fellow citizens, partaking of your fortunes, whether for good or for evil, those who bear my name, and inherit my blood. (Repeated cheering.)

The Mayor has spoken very kindly of the exertions which I have made since I have held a position in the Cabinet, and especially upon the results of the negotiation in which I have been recently engaged. I hope, fellow citizens, that something has been done which may prove permanently useful to the public. I have endeavored to do something, and I hope my endeavors have not been in vain. I have had a hard summer's work, it is true, but I am not wholly unused to hard work. I have had some anxious days, I have spent some sleepless nights; but if the results of my efforts meet the approbation of the community, I am richly compensated. (Applause.) My other days will be the happier, and my other nights will be given to a sweeter repose.

It was an object of the highest national importance, no doubt, to disperse the clouds which threatened a storm between England and America. For several years past there has been a class of questions open between the two countries, which have not always threatened war, but which have not assured the people of permanent peace.

I will but advert to him to whom so just a tribute has been paid by the Mayor, by whom, in 1841, I was called to the place

I now occupy ; and although, gentlemen, I know it is in very bad taste to speak much of one's self, yet here, among my friends and neighbors, I wish to say a word or two on a subject in which I am concerned. (Loud cheers.) With the late President Harrison, I had contracted an acquaintance while we were both members of Congress, and I had an opportunity of renewing it afterwards in his own house, and elsewhere. I have made no exhibition, or boast, of the confidence which it was his pleasure to repose in me ; but circumstances, hardly worthy of serious notice, have rendered it not improper for me to say on this occasion, that as soon as President Harrison was elected, without, of course, one word from me, he wrote to me inviting me to take a place in his Cabinet, leaving to me the choice of that place, and asking my advice as to the persons that should fill every other place in it. (Cheers.) He expressed rather a wish that I should take the administration of the Treasury, because, as he was pleased to say, I had devoted myself with success to the examination of the questions of currency and finance, and he felt that the wants of the country,—the necessities of the country, on the great subjects of currency and finance, were moving causes that produced the revolution which had placed him in the presidential chair.

It so happened, gentlemen, that my preference was for the other place,—for that which I have now the honor to fill. I felt all its responsibilities ; but I must say, that with whatever attention I had considered the general question of finance, I felt more competent and willing to undertake the duties of an office which did not involve the daily drudgery of the Treasury.

I was not disappointed, gentlemen, in the exigency which then existed in our foreign relations. I was not unaware of all the difficulties which hung over us ; for although the whole of the danger was not at that moment developed, the cause of it was known, and it seemed as if an outbreak was sure to be at hand. I allude now to that occurrence on the frontier of which the Chairman has already spoken, which took place in the winter of 1841,—the case of Alexander McLeod.

A year or two before, the British government had seen fit to authorize a military incursion, for a particular purpose, within

the territory of the United States; that purpose was to destroy a steamboat, charged with being employed for hostile purposes, against its forces and its peaceable subjects in Canada. The act was avowed by the British Government, as a public act. Alexander McLeod, a person who individually could claim no regard or sympathy, happened to be one of the agents who, in a military character, performed the act of their sovereign. Coming into the United States some years after, he was arrested under a charge of homicide committed in this act, and was held to trial as for a private felony.

According to my apprehensions, a proceeding of this kind was directly adverse to the well settled doctrines of the public law. It could not but be received with lively indignation, not only by Her Majesty's Government, but among the people of her Government. It would be so received among us. If a citizen of the United States, by order of his Government, and as a military man, should receive an order and obey it, (which he must either obey or be hanged,) and should afterwards in the territory of another power, which by that act he had offended, be tried for a violation of its law, as for a crime, and threatened with individual punishment, there is not a man in the United States who would not cry out for redress and for vengeance. Any elevated Government, in a case like this, where one of its citizens, in the performance of his duty, incurs such menaces and danger, assumes the responsibility; any elevated Government says: "The act was mine—I am the man;" as in the story of Nisus and Euryalus, "*adsum qui feci, in me convertite ferrum.*"

Now, gentlemen, information of the action of the British government on this subject was transmitted to us at Washington within a few days after the installation of General Harrison. I did not think that it was proper to make public then, nor is it important to say now, all that we knew on the subject; but I will tell you, in general terms, that if all that was known at Washington, then, had been communicated throughout the country, the shipping interest of this city, and every other interest connected with the commerce of the country, would have been depressed one half in six hours. I thought that the concussion might be averted, by holding up to view the principle of public law, by which this

question ought to be settled, and by demanding an apology for whatever had been done against the principles of public law by the British government or its officers. (Cheers.) I thought we ought to put ourselves right in the first place, and then we could insist that they should do right in the next place. (Laughter and cheering.) When in England, in the year 1839, I had occasion to address a large assemblage of English personages; and allusion having been made to the relations of things between the two countries, I stated then, what I thought and now think, that in any controversy which should terminate in war between the United States and England, the only eminent advantage that *either* would possess, would be found in the rectitude of its cause. With the right on our side, we are a match for England; and with the right on her side, she is a match for us, or for any body. (Laughter and cheers.)

We live in an age, fellow citizens, when there has come into exercise, and into judgment, a more elevated tribunal than ever before existed on earth; I mean the tribunal of the enlightened public opinion of the world. Nations cannot go to war now, either with or without the consent of their own subjects or people, without the reprobation of other States, unless for grounds and reasons justifying them in the general judgment of mankind. The influence of civilization, of commerce, and of that heavenly light that beams over Christendom, restrains men, congresses, parliaments, princes and people, from gratifying the inordinate love of ambition through the bloody scenes of war. (Cheers.) It has been wisely said, and it is true, that every settlement of national differences between Christian States, on fair negotiation, without resort to arms, is a new tribute, and a new proof of the benign influence of the Christian faith.

With regard to the terms of this treaty, and in relation to the other subjects connected with it, it is somewhat awkward for me to speak, because the documents connected with them have not been made public by authority. But I persuade myself, that when the whole shall be calmly considered, it will be seen that there was throughout a fervent disposition to maintain the interest and honor of the country, united with a proper regard for the preservation of peace between us and the greatest commercial nation of the world.

Gentlemen, while I receive these commendations which you have bestowed, I have an agreeable duty to perform to others. In the first place, I have great pleasure in bearing testimony to the intelligent attention manifested by the President of the United States, under whose authority, of course, I constantly acted throughout the negotiation, and his sincere and anxious desire that it might result successfully. I take great pleasure in acknowledging here, as I will acknowledge every where, my obligations to him for the unbroken and steady confidence reposed in me, through the whole progress of an affair, not unimportant to the country, and infinitely important to my own reputation.

A negotiator disparaged, distrusted, treated with jealousy by his own Government, were indeed a very unequal match for a cool and sagacious representative of one of the proudest and most powerful monarchies of Europe, possessing in the fullest extent the confidence of his Government, and authorized to bind it in concerns of the greatest importance. I shall never forget the frankness and generosity with which, after a full and free interchange of suggestions upon the subject, I was told that on my shoulders rested the responsibility of the negotiation, and on my discretion and judgment should rest the lead of every measure. (Cheers.) I desire also to speak here of the hearty coöperation rendered every day by the other gentlemen connected with the administration, from every one of whom I received important assistance. I speak with satisfaction, also, of the useful labors of all the Commissioners, although I need hardly say here, what has been already said officially, that the highest respect is due to the Commissioners from Maine and Massachusetts for their faithful adherence to the rights of their own States, mingled with a cordial coöperation in what was required by the general interests of the United States. And I hope I shall not be considered as trespassing on this occasion, if I speak of the happy selection made by England, of a person to represent her Government on this occasion — a thorough Englishman, understanding and appreciating the great objects and interests of his own Government, of large and liberal views, and of such standing and weight of character at home, as to impress a feeling of approbation of his course upon both government and people. He was

fully acquainted with the subject, and always, on all occasions, as far as his allegiance and duty permitted, thought and acted favorably of and towards this country.

Aside from the question of the boundary, there were other important subjects to be considered, which I know not whether this is a proper occasion to allude to. When the results of the negotiation shall be fully before the public, it will be seen that these other questions have not been neglected, questions of great moment and importance to the country; and then I shall look with concern, but with faith and trust, for the judgment of that country upon them. It is but just to take notice of a very important act, intended to provide for such cases as McLeod's, for which the country is indebted to the Whig majorities, in the two Houses of Congress, acting upon the President's recommendation. Events showed the absolute necessity of removing into the national tribunals questions involving the peace and honor of the country.

There yet remain, gentlemen, several other subjects still unsettled with England. First, there is that concerning the trade between the United States and the possessions of England, on this continent, and in the West Indies. It has been my duty to look into that subject, and to keep the run of it, as we say, from the arrangement of 1829 and 1830, until the present time. That arrangement was one unfavorable to the shipping interests of the United States, and especially so to the New-England States. To adjust these relations is an important subject, either for diplomatic negotiation, or the consideration of Congress. One or both houses of Congress, indeed, has already called upon the proper department for a report upon the operations of that arrangement, and a committee of the House of Representatives has made a report, showing that some adjustment of these relations is of vital importance to the future prosperity of our navigating interests.

There is another question, somewhat more remote; that of the North-west Boundary, where the possessions of the two countries touch each other upon the Pacific. There are evident public reasons why that question should be settled before the country becomes peopled.

There are also, gentlemen, many open questions respecting our relations with other governments. Upon most of the other States of this continent, citizens of the United States have claims, with regard to which the delays already incurred have caused great injustice; and it becomes the Government of the United States, by a calm and dignified course, and a deliberate and vigorous tone of administration of public affairs, to secure prompt justice to our citizens in these quarters.

I am here to-day as a guest. I was invited by a number of highly valued personal and political friends, to partake with them of a public dinner, for the purpose of giving them an opportunity to pass the usual greeting of friends upon my return; of testifying their respect for my public services heretofore, and of tendering congratulations upon the results of the late negotiation. It was at my instance that this proposed dinner took the form of this meeting, and instead of meeting them at the festive board, I agreed to meet them and those who chose to meet me with them, here. Still, the general character of the meeting seems not to be changed. I am here as a guest; here to receive greetings and salutations for particular services, and not under any intimation or expectation that I should address the gentlemen who invited me or others here, upon subjects not suggested by themselves. It would not become me to use the occasion for any more general purpose. Because, although I have a design at some time not far distant, to make known my sentiments upon political matters generally, and upon the political state of the country, and that of its several parties, yet I know very well that I should be trespassing beyond the bounds of politeness and propriety, should I enter upon this whole wide field now. I will not enter upon it, because the gentlemen who invited me entertain on many of these topics, views different from my own, and they would very properly say, that they came here to meet Mr. Webster, to congratulate him upon the late negotiation, and to exchange sentiments upon matters about which they agreed with him; and that it was not in very correct taste for him to use the occasion to express sentiments upon other subjects on which they differ. It is on that account that I shall forbear discussing political subjects at large, and shall endeavor to confine my re-

marks to that which may be considered as affecting myself, directly or indirectly.

The Mayor was kind enough to say, that having, in his judgment, performed the duties of my own department to the satisfaction of my country, it might be left to me to take care of my own honor and reputation. (Cheers.) I suppose that he meant to say, that in the present distracted state of the Whig party, and among the contrariety of opinions that prevail (if there be a contrariety of opinion) as to the course proper for *me* to pursue, the decision of that question might be left to myself. I am exactly of his opinion. (Loud and continued applause, concluded by three regular cheers.) I am quite of opinion that on a question touching my own honor and character, as I am to bear the consequences of the decision, I had a great deal better be trusted to make it. (Cheers.) No man feels more highly the advantage of the advice of friends than I do; but on a question delicate and important like that, I like to choose myself the friends who are to give me advice; and upon this subject, gentlemen, I shall leave you as enlightened as I found you.

I give no pledges, I make no intimations, one way or the other; and I will be as free, when this day closes, to act as duty calls, as I was when the dawn of this day — (Here Mr. W. was interrupted by tremendous applause, ending with three times three cheers. When silence was restored he continued :)

There is a delicacy in the case, because there is always delicacy and regret when one feels obliged to differ from his friends; but there is no embarrassment. There is no embarrassment, because if I see the path of duty before me, I have that within me which will enable me to pursue it, and throw all embarrassment to the winds. (Renewed cheering.) A public man has no occasion to be embarrassed, if he is honest. Himself and his feelings should be to him as nobody and as nothing; the interest of his country must be to him as every thing; (cheers;) he must sink what is personal to himself, making exertions for his country; and it is his ability and readiness to do this, which is to mark him as a great or as a little man in time to come. (Cheers.)

There were many persons in September, 1841, who found great fault with my remaining in the President's Cabinet. You

know, gentlemen, that twenty years of honest, and not altogether undistinguished service in the Whig cause, did not save me from an outpouring of wrath, which seldom proceeds from Whig pens and Whig tongues against any body. I am, gentlemen, a little hard to coax, but as to being driven, that is out of the question. (Laughter.) I chose to trust my own judgment, and thinking I was in a post where I was in the service of the country, and could do it good, I staid there. (Cheers.) And I leave it to you to-day to say, I leave it to my country to say, whether the country would have been better off if I had left also. (Renewed cheering.) I have no attachment to office. I have tasted of its sweets, but I have tasted of its bitterness. I am content with what I have achieved; I am more ready to rest satisfied with what is gained, than to run the risk of doubtful efforts for new acquisition. (Cheers.)

I suppose I ought to pause here. (Cries of "go on.") I ought, perhaps, to allude to nothing more, and I will not allude to any thing further than it may be supposed to concern myself, directly or by implication. Gentlemen, and Mr. Mayor, a most respectable convention of Whig delegates met in this place a few days since, and passed very important resolutions. There is no set of gentlemen in the commonwealth, so far as I know them, who have more of my respect and regard. They are Whigs, but they are no better Whigs than I am. They have served the country in the Whig ranks,—so have I, quite as long as most of them, perhaps with less ability and success. Their resolutions on political subjects, as representing the Whigs of the State, are entitled to respect, so far as they were authorized to express opinion on those subjects, and no further. They were sent hither, as I supposed, to agree upon candidates for the offices of Governor and Lieutenant Governor for the support of the Whigs of Massachusetts; and if they had any authority to speak in the name of the Whigs of Massachusetts to any other purport or intent, I have not been informed of it. I feel very little disturbed by any of those proceedings, of whatever nature; but some of them appear to me to have been inconsiderate and hasty, and their point and bearing can hardly be mistaken. I notice among others, a declaration made in be-

half of all the Whigs of this commonwealth, of "a full and final separation from the President of the United States." If those gentlemen saw fit to express their own sentiments to that extent, there was no objection. Whigs speak their sentiments every where; but whether they may assume a privilege to speak for others on a point on which those others have not given them authority, is another question. I am a Whig, I always have been a Whig, and I always will be one; (tremendous cheering;) and if there are any who would turn me out of the pale of that communion, let them see who will get out first. (Laughter and cheers.) I am a Massachusetts Whig, a Faneuil Hall Whig, (renewed cheering,) having breathed this air for five and twenty years, and meaning to breathe it, as long as God spares my life. I am ready to submit to all decisions of Whig Conventions on subjects on which they are authorized to make decisions; I know that great party good and great public good can only be so obtained. But it is quite another question whether a set of gentlemen, however respectable they may be as individuals, shall have the power to bind me on matters which I have not agreed to submit to their decision at all.

"A full and final separation" is declared between the Whig party of Massachusetts and the President. That is the text:—it requires a commentary. What does it mean? The President of the United States has three years of his term of office yet unexpired. Does this declaration mean then, that during those three years all the measures of his administration are to be opposed by the great body of the Whig party of Massachusetts, whether they are right or wrong? There are great public interests which require his attention.

If the President of the United States should attempt, by negotiation, or by earnest and serious application to Congress, to make some change in the present arrangements, such as should be of service to those interests of navigation which are concerned in the colonial trade, are the Whigs of Massachusetts to give him neither aid nor succor? (Cries of No! No!) If the President of the United States shall direct the proper department to review the whole commercial policy of the United States, in respect of reciprocity in the indirect trade, to which so

much of our tonnage is now sacrificed,—if the amendment of this policy shall be undertaken by him,—is there such a separation between him and the Whigs of Massachusetts as shall lead them and their representatives to oppose it? (No! No!) Do you know (there are gentlemen now here who do know) that a large proportion—I rather think that more than one half—of the carrying trade between the empire of Brazil and the United States, is enjoyed by tonnage from the north of Europe, in consequence of this ill-considered principle with regard to reciprocity. You might just as well admit them into the coasting trade. By this arrangement, we take the bread out of our children's mouths and give it to strangers. I appeal to you, Sir, (turning to Captain Benjamin Rich, who sat by him;) is not this true? (Mr. Rich at once replied, True!)

(Mr. Webster continued.) Is every measure of this sort, for the relief of such abuses, to be rejected? Are we to suffer ourselves to remain inactive under every grievance of this kind, until these three years shall expire, and through as many more as shall pass until Providence shall bless us with more power of doing good than we have now?

Again: there are now in this State, persons employed under government, allowed to be pretty good Whigs, still holding their offices: Collectors, District Attorneys, Post Masters, Marshals. What is to become of them in this separation? Which side are they to fall? (Laughter.) Are they to resign? or is this resolution to be held up to government as an invitation or a provocation to turn them out? Our distinguished fellow-citizen, who, with so much credit to himself and to his country, represents our government in England,—is *he* expected to come home, on this separation, and yield his place to his predecessor, or to somebody else? And in regard to the individual who addresses you—what do his brother Whigs mean to do with him? Where do they mean to place me? (Laughter.) Generally, when a divorce takes place, the parties divide their children. I am anxious to know, where, in the case of this divorce, I shall fall. (Laughter.) This declaration denounces a full and final separation between the Whigs of Massachusetts and the President. If I choose to remain in the President's counsels, do

these gentlemen mean to say that I cease to be a Massachusetts Whig? I am quite ready to put that question to the people of Massachusetts.

I would not treat this matter too lightly, nor yet too seriously. I know very well that, when public bodies get together, resolutions can never be considered with any degree of deliberation. They are passed as they are presented. Who the honorable gentlemen were, who drew this resolution, I do not know. I suspect that they had not much meaning in it, and that they have not very clearly defined what little meaning they had. They were angry; they were resentful; they had drawn up a string of charges against the President,—a bill of indictment, as it were,—and, to close the whole, they introduced this declaration about “a full and final separation.” I could not read this, of course, without perceiving that it had an intentional or unintentional bearing on my position; and therefore it was proper for me to allude to it here.

Gentlemen, there are some topics on which it has been my fortune to differ from my old friends. They may be right on these topics; very probably they are; but I am sure *I* am right in maintaining my opinions, such as they are, when I have formed them honestly and on deliberation. There seems to me to be a disposition to postpone all attempts to do good to the country to some future and uncertain day. Yet there is a Whig majority in each house of Congress, and I am of opinion that the time is now to accomplish what yet remains to be accomplished. (Applause.) Some gentlemen are for suffering the present Congress to expire; another Congress to be chosen, and to expire also; a third Congress to be chosen, and then, if there shall be a Whig majority in both branches, and a Whig President, they propose to take up highly important and pressing subjects.

These are persons, gentlemen, of more sanguine temperament than myself. “Confidence,” says Lord Chatham, “is a plant of slow growth in an old bosom.” He referred to confidence in men, but the remark is as true of confidence in predictions of future occurrences. Many Whigs see before us a prospect of more power, and a better chance to serve the country, than

we now possess. Far along in the horizon, they discern mild skies and haleyon seas, while fogs and darkness and mists blind other sons of humanity from beholding all this bright vision. It was not so that we accomplished our last great victory, by simply brooding over a glorious Whig future. We succeeded in 1840, but not without an effort; and I know that nothing but union — cordial, sympathetic, fraternal union — can prevent the party that achieved that success from renewed prostration. It is not,— I would say it in the presence of the world,— it is not by premature and partial, by proscriptive and denunciatory proceedings, that this great Whig family can ever be kept together, or that Whig counsels can maintain their ascendancy. This is perfectly plain and obvious. It was a party from the first, made up of different opinions and principles, of gentlemen of every political complexion, uniting to make a change in the administration. There were men of strong state rights principles; men of strong federal principles; men of extreme tariff, and men of extreme anti-tariff, notions. What could be expected of such a party, unless animated by a spirit of conciliation and harmony, of union and sympathy? Its true policy was, from the first, and must be, unless it meditates its own destruction, to heal, and not to widen, the breaches that existed in its ranks. It consented to become united in order to save the country from a continuation of a ruinous course of measures. And the lesson taught by the whole history of the revolution of 1840 is, the momentous value of conciliation, friendship, sympathy, and union.

Gentlemen, if I understand the matter, there were four or five great objects in that revolution. And in the first place, one great object was that of attempting to secure permanent peace between this country and England. For although, as I have said, we were not actually at war, we were subjected to perpetual agitations, which disturb the interests of the country almost as much as war. They break in upon men's pursuits, and render them incapable of calculating or judging of their chances of success in any proposed line or course of business. A settled peace was one of the objects of that revolution. I am glad if you think this is accomplished.

The next object of that revolution was an increase of revenue. It was notorious that, for the several last years, the expenditures for the administration of government had exceeded the receipts; in other words, government had been running in debt, and in the mean time, the operation of the compromise act was still further and faster diminishing the revenue itself. A sound revenue was one of those objects; and that it has been accomplished, our thanks and praise are due to the Congress that has just adjourned. (Applause.)

A third object was protection — protection incidental to revenue, or consequent upon revenue. Now as to that, gentlemen, much has been done, and I hope it will be found that enough has been done. And for this, too, all the Whigs who supported that measure in Congress are entitled to high praise; they receive mine, and I hope they do yours; it is right that they should. But let us be just. The French rhetoricians have a maxim that there is nothing beautiful that is not true: I am afraid that some of our jubilant oratory would hardly stand the test of this canon of criticism. It is not true that a majority, composed of Whigs, could be found, in either House, in favor of the Tariff Bill. More than thirty Whigs, many of them gentlemen of lead and influence, voted against the law, from beginning to end, on all questions, direct and indirect; and it is not pleasant to consider what would have been the state of the country, the Treasury, and the Government itself, at this moment, if the law actually passed, for revenue and for protection, had depended on Whig votes alone. After all, it passed the House of Representatives by a single vote; and there is a good deal of *eclat* about that single vote. But did not every gentleman who voted for it take the responsibility and deserve the honor of that single vote? Several gentlemen in the opposition thus befriended the bill; thus did our neighbor from the Middlesex district of this State, (Mr. Parmenter,) voting for the Tariff out and out as steadily as did my honored friend, the member from this city. We hear nothing of his "coming to the rescue," and yet he had that *one vote*, and held the tariff in his hand as absolutely as if he had had a Presidential veto! And how was it in the Senate? It passed by one vote again there, and could not have

passed at all, without the assistance of the two senators from Pennsylvania, of Mr. Williams of Maine, and Mr. Wright of New York. Let us then admit the truth, (and a lawyer may do that when it helps his case,) (laughter,) that it was necessary that a large portion of the other party should come to the assistance of the Whigs, to enable them to carry the tariff, and that if this assistance had not been rendered, the tariff must have failed.

And this is a very important truth for New England. Her children, looking to their manufactures and industry for their livelihood, must rejoice to find the tariff, so necessary to these, no party question. Can they desire, can they wish, that such a great object as the protection of industry should become a party object, rising with party, and, with the failure of the party that supported it, going to the grave? (Cries of No! No!) This is a national, a public question. The tariff ought to be inwrought in the sentiments of all parties; and although I hope that the preëminence of Whig principles may be eternal, I wish to take bond and security, that we may make the protection of domestic industry more durable even than Whig supremacy. (Cheers.)

Let us be true in another respect. This tariff has accomplished much, and is an honor to the men who passed it. But, in regard to protection, it has only restored the country to the state in which it was before the compromise act, and from which it fell under the operation of that act. It has repaired the consequences of that *measure*, and it has done *no more*. I may speak of the compromise act. My turn has come now. (Laughter.) No measure ever passed Congress during my connection with that body that caused me so much grief and mortification. It was passed by a few friends joining the whole host of the enemy. I have heard much of the *motives* of that act. The personal motives of those that passed the act were, I doubt not, pure; and all public men are supposed to act from pure motives. (Laughter.) But if by motives are meant the objects proposed by the act itself, and expressed in it, then I say, if those be the motives alluded to, they are worse than the act itself. The principle was bad, the measure was bad, the conse-

quences were bad. Every circumstance, as well as every line of the act itself, shows that the design was to impose upon legislation a restraint that the constitution had not imposed ; to insert in the constitution a new prohibitory clause, providing that, after the year 1842, no revenue should be collected except according to an absurd horizontal system, and none exceeding twenty per cent. It was then pressed through under the great emergency of the public necessities. But I may now recur to what I then said, namely, that its principle was false and dangerous, and that, when its time came, it would rack and convulse our system. I said we should not get rid of it without throes and spasms.

Has not this been as predicted ? We have felt the spasms and throes of this convulsion ; but we have at last gone through them, and begin to breathe again. It is something, that that act is at last got rid of ; and the present tariff is deserving in this, that it is specific and discriminating, that it holds to common sense, and rejects and discards the principles of the compromise act, I hope, for ever. (Cheers.)

Another great and principal object of the revolution of 1840, was a restoration of the currency. Our troubles did not begin with want of money in the treasury, or under the sapping and mining operation of the compromise act. They are of earlier date. The trouble and distress of the country began with the *currency* in 1833, and broke out with new severity in 1837. Other causes of difficulty have since arisen, but the first great shock, was a shock on the currency ; and from the effect of this the country is not yet relieved. I hope the late act may yield competent revenue, and am sure it will do much for protection. But until you provide a better currency, so that you may have a universal one, of equal and general value throughout the land, I am hard to be persuaded that we shall see the day of our former prosperity. Currency, accredited currency, and easy and cheap internal exchanges—until these things be obtained, depend upon it, the country will find no adequate relief.

And now, fellow citizens, I will say a word or two on the history of the transactions on this subject. At the special session of Congress, the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Ewing, arranged a

plan for a national bank. That plan was founded upon the idea of a large capital, furnished mainly by private subscriptions, and included branches for local discounts. I need not advert, gentlemen, to the circumstances under which this scheme was drawn up, and received, as it did, the approbation of the President and Cabinet, as the best thing that could be done. I need not remind you that he had been called to the head of the government, whom we had all agreed should hold the second place in it. I need not say that he held opinions wholly different from mine on these subjects which now came before us. But those opinions were fixed, and therefore it was thought the part of wisdom and prudence not to see how strong a case might be made against the President, but to get along as well as we might. With such views, Mr. Ewing presented his plan to Congress. As most persons will remember, the clause allowing the bank to establish branches, provided that those branches might be placed in any State which should give its consent. I have no idea that there is any necessity for such a restriction. I believe Congress has the power to establish the branches without as well as with the consent of the States. But that clause, at most, was theoretical. I never could find any body who could show any practical mischief resulting from it. Its opponents went upon the theory, which I do not exactly accord with, that in any case, an omission to exercise a power, amounts to a surrender of that power. At any rate, it was the best thing that could be done; and its rejection was the commencement of the disastrous dissensions between the President and Congress.

Gentlemen, it was exceedingly doubtful at the time when that plan was prepared, whether the capital would be subscribed. But we did what we could about it. We asked the opinion of the leading merchants of the principal commercial cities. They were invited to Washington to confer with us. They expressed doubts whether the bank could be put into operation, but they expressed hopes also, and they pledged themselves to do the best they could to advance it. And as the commercial interests were in its favor, as the administration was new and fresh and popular, and the people were desirous to have something done, a great earnestness was felt that that bill should be tried.

It was sent to the Senate at the Senate's request, and by the Senate it was rejected. Another bill was reported in the Senate, without the provision requiring the consent of the States to branches,—was discussed for six weeks or two months, and then could not pass even a Whig Senate. Here was the origin of distrust, disunion, and resentment.

I will not pursue the unhappy narrative of the latter part of the session of 1841. Men had begun to grow excited and angry and resentful. I expressed the opinion, at an early period, to all those to whom I was entitled to speak, that it would be a great deal better to forbear further action at present;—that opinion as expressed to the two Whig Senators from Massachusetts is before the public. I wished Congress to give time for consultation to take place, for harmony to be restored; because I looked for no good, but to the united and harmonious action of all the branches of the Whig government. I suppose that counsel was not good, certainly it was not followed. I need not add the comment.

This brings us, as far as concerns the questions of currency, to the last session of Congress. Early in that session the Secretary of the Treasury sent in a plan of an exchequer. It met with little favor in either House, and therefore it is necessary for me, gentlemen, lest the whole burden fall on others, to say that it met my hearty, sincere, and entire approbation. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I hope that I have not manifested through my public life a very overweening confidence in my own judgment, or a very unreasonable unwillingness to accept the views of others. But there are some subjects on which I feel entitled to pay some respect to my own opinion. The subject of currency, gentlemen, has been the study of my life. Thirty years ago, a little before my entrance into the councils of the Government, the questions connected with a mixed currency, involving the proper relation of paper to specie, and the proper means of restricting an excessive issue of paper, came to be discussed by the most acute and well disciplined understandings in England in Parliament. At that time, during the suspension of specie payments by the bank, when paper was fifteen per cent. below par, Mr. Vansittart had presented his celebrated resolution declaring that a bank note

was still worth the value expressed on its face—that the bank note had not depreciated, but that the price of bullion had risen. Lord Liverpool and Lord Castlereagh espoused this view, as we know, and it was opposed by the close reasoning of Huskisson, the powerful logic of Horner, and the practical common sense of Alexander Baring, now Lord Ashburton. (Applause.) The study of those debates made me a bullionist. They convinced me that paper could not circulate safely in any country, any longer than it was immediately redeemable at the place of its issue. Coming into Congress the very next year, or the next but one after, and finding the finances of the country in a most deplorable condition, I then and ever after bestowed myself, in preference to all other public topics, to the consideration of the questions relating to them. I believe I have read every thing of value that has been published since on those questions, on either side of the Atlantic. I have studied by close observation, the laws of paper currency as they have exhibited themselves in this and in other countries, from 1811 down to the present time. I have expressed my opinions at various times in Congress, and some of the predictions which I have made have not been altogether falsified by subsequent events. I must therefore be permitted, gentlemen, without yielding to any flippant paragraph of a newspaper, or to the hasty ebullitions of debate in a public assembly, to say, that I believe the plan for an Exchequer as presented to Congress at its last session, is the *best* measure—the *only* measure for the adoption of Congress and the trial of the people. I am ready to stake my reputation upon it, and that is all that I have to stake. I am ready to stake my reputation, that if this Whig Congress will take that measure and give it a fair trial, within three years it will be admitted by the whole American people to be the most beneficial measure of any sort ever adopted in this country, the Constitution only excepted. (Cheers.) I mean that they should take it as it was when it came from the Cabinet, not as it looked when the Committees of Congress had laid their hands upon it. (Laughter.) For when the Committees of Congress had struck out the proviso respecting exchange, it was not worth a rush; it was not worth the parchment it would be engrossed upon. The great desire of this country is a general

currency, a facility of exchange; a currency which shall be the same for you and for the people of Alabama, and Louisiana; and a system of exchange which shall equalize credit between them and you, with the rapidity and facility with which steam conveys men and merchandise. That is what the country wants, what you want, and you have not got it.

You have not got it, you cannot get it, but by some adequate provision of government. Exchange, ready exchange that will enable a man to turn his New Orleans means into money to-day, as we have had in better times — millions a year exchanged, at only three quarters of one per cent., is what is wanted. How are we to obtain this? A Bank of the United States founded on a private subscription is out of the question. That is an obsolete idea. The country and the condition of things have changed. Suppose that a bank were chartered with a capital of fifty millions, to be raised by private subscription. Would it not be out of all possibility to find the money? Who would subscribe? What would you get for shares? And as for the local discount, do you wish it? Do you, in State street, wish that the nation should send millions of untaxed banking capital hither to increase your discounts? What then shall we do? People who are waiting for power to make a Bank of the United States, may as well postpone all attempts to benefit the country to the incoming of the Jews. (Laughter.)

What then shall we do? Let us turn to this plan of the Exchequer, brought forward last year. It was assailed from all quarters. One gentleman did say, I believe, that by some possibility, some good might come out of it, (laughter,) but in general, it met with a different opposition from every different class. Some said it would be a perfectly lifeless machine,— that it was no system at all,—that it would do nothing, for good or evil; others thought that it had a great deal too much vitality, admitting that it would answer the purpose perfectly well for which it was designed, but fearing that it would increase the executive power: thus making it at once King Log and King Serpent. One party called it a ridiculous imbecility; the other, a dangerous giant, that might subvert the constitution. These varied arguments, contradicting, if not refuting one

another, convinced me of one thing at least,—that the bill would not be adopted, nor even temperately and candidly considered. And it was not. In a manner quite unusual, it was discussed, assailed, denounced, before it was allowed to take the course of reference and examination. It is extraordinary, what difficulties we meet in carrying out our system of constitutional government. The constitution was intended as an instrument of great political good; but we sometimes so dispute its meaning, that we cannot use it at all. One man will not have a bank, without the power of local discount, against the consent of the States; for that, he insists, would break the constitution. Another will not have a bank with such a power, because he thinks *that* would break the constitution. A third will not have an exchequer, with authority to deal in exchanges, because that would increase executive influence, and so might break the constitution. And between them all, we are like the boatman who, in the midst of rocks and currents and whirlpools, will not pull one stroke for safety, lest he break his oar. Are we now looking for the time when we can charter a United States bank, with a large private subscription? When will that be? When confidence is restored. Are we, then, to do nothing to save the vessel from sinking, till the chances of the winds and waves have landed us on the shore? He is more sanguine than I am, who thinks that the time will soon come when the Whigs have more power to work effectually for the good of the country than they now have. The voice of patriotism calls upon them not to postpone, but to act at this moment, at the very next session; to make the best of their means, and to try. (Cheers.) You say that the administration is responsible; why not then try the plan it has recommended. If it fails, let the President bear the responsibility. If you will not try this plan, why not propose something else?

Gentlemen, in speaking of events that have happened, I ought to say, and will, since I am making a full and free communication, (cheers,) that there is no one of my age, and I am no longer very young, who has written or spoken more against the abuse and indiscreet use of the veto power, than I have. (Cheers.) And there is no one whose opinions upon this sub-

ject are more unchanged. (Renewed cheering.) I presume it is universally known, that I have advised against the use of the veto power on every occasion when it has been used since I have been in the Cabinet. (Tremendous cheering.) But I am, nevertheless, not willing to join those who seem more desirous to make out a case against the President, than of serving their country, to the extent of their ability, vetoes notwithstanding. (Cheers.) Indeed, at the close of the extra session, the received doctrine of many, for a time, seemed to be, that they would undertake nothing until they could amend the constitution so as to do away with this power. This was a mere mockery. If we were now reforming the constitution, we might wish for some, I do not say what, guards and restraints upon this power, more than the constitution at present contains; but no convention would recommend striking it out altogether. Have not the people of New York lately amended their constitution, so as to require, in certain legislative action, votes of two thirds? and is not this same restriction in daily use in the national House of Representatives itself, in the case of suspension of the rules? This constitutional power, therefore, is no greater a restraint than this body imposes on itself. But it is utterly hopeless to look for such an amendment; who expects to live to see its day? And to give up all practical efforts, and to go on with a general idea that the constitution must be amended before any thing can be done, was, I will not say trifling, but treating the great necessities of the people as of quite too little importance. This Congress accomplished, in this regard, nothing for the people. The exchequer plan which was submitted to it, will accomplish some of the objects of the people, and especially the Whig people. I am confident of it; I know it. (Cheers.) When a mechanic makes a tool, an axe, a saw, or a plane, and knows that the temper is good, and the parts are well proportioned, he knows that it will answer its purpose. And I know that this plan will answer its purpose. (Cheers.)

There are other objects which ought not to be neglected, among which is one of such importance that I will not now pass it by—I mean the mortifying state of the public credit of this country at this time. I cannot help thinking, that if the

statesmen of a former age were among us,—if Washington were here,—if John Adams, and Hamilton, and Madison, were here,—they would be deeply concerned, and soberly thoughtful, about the present state of the public credit of the country. In the position I fill, it becomes my duty to read, generally with pleasure, but sometimes with pain, communications from our public agents abroad. It is distressing to hear them speak of *their* distress at what they see and hear of the scorn and contumely with which the American character and American credit are treated abroad. Why, at this very time, we have a loan in the market, which, at the present rate of money and credit, ought to command in Europe one hundred and twenty-five per cent. Can we sell a dollar of it? And how is it with the credit of our own commonwealth? Does it not find itself affected in its credit by the general state of the credit of the country? Is there nobody ready to make a movement in this matter? is there not a man in our councils large enough, comprehensive enough in his views, to undertake at least to *present* this case before the American people, and thus do something to restore the public character for morals and honesty?

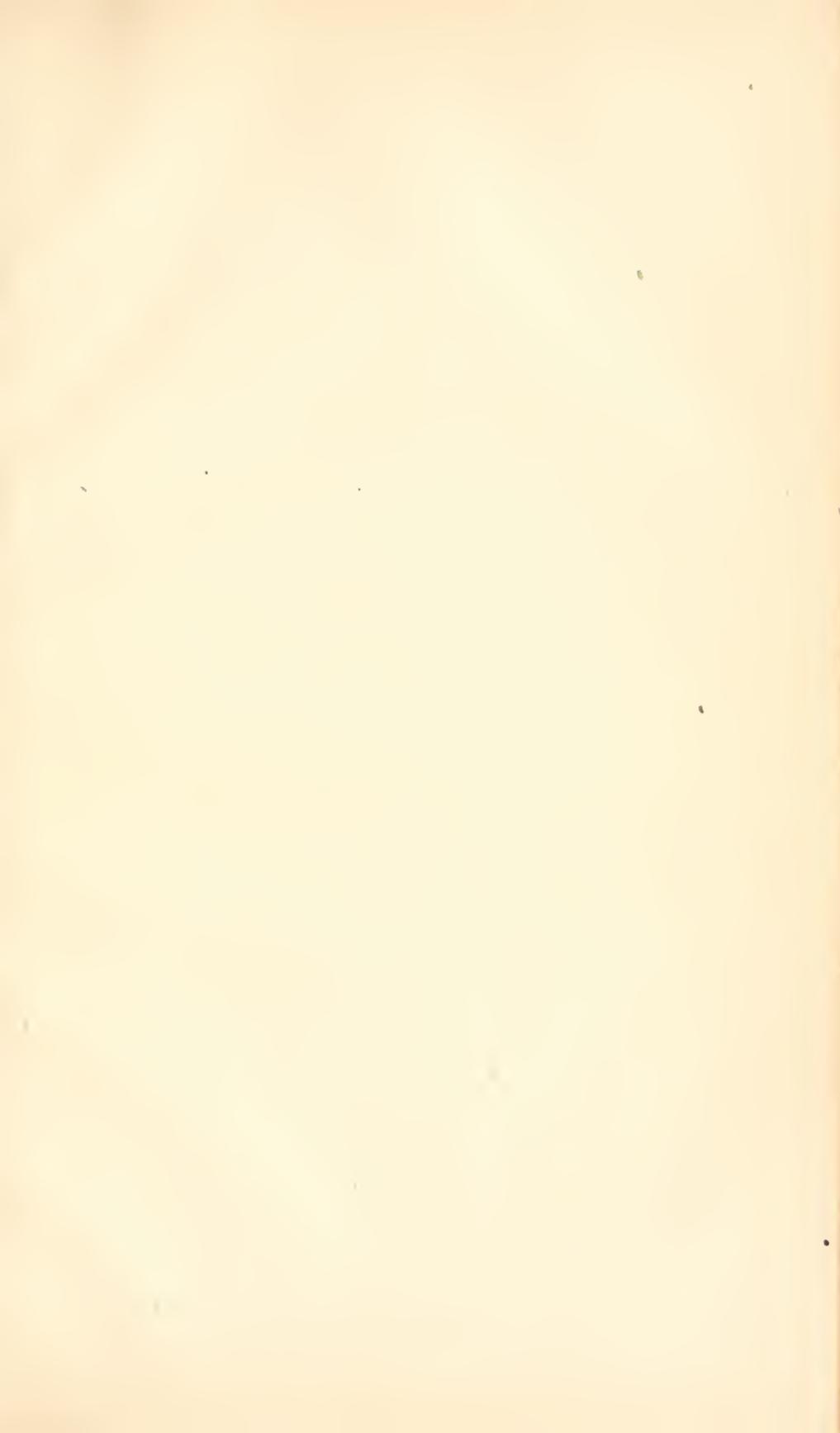
There are in the country some men, who are indiscreet enough to talk of *repudiation*,—to advise their fellow-citizens to *repudiate* public debt. Does repudiation pay a debt? Does it discharge the debtor? Can it so modify a debt that it shall not be always binding, in law as well as in morals? No, gentlemen; repudiation does nothing but add a sort of disrepute to acknowledged inability. It is our duty, so far as is in our power, to rouse the public feeling on the subject; to maintain and assert the universal principles of law and justice, and the importance of preserving public faith and credit. People say that the intelligent capitalists of Europe ought to distinguish between the United States government and the State governments. So they ought; but, gentlemen, what does all this amount to? Does not the general government comprise the same people who make up the State governments? May not these Europeans ask us how long it may be before the national councils will repudiate public obligations?

The doctrine of repudiation has inflicted upon us a stain

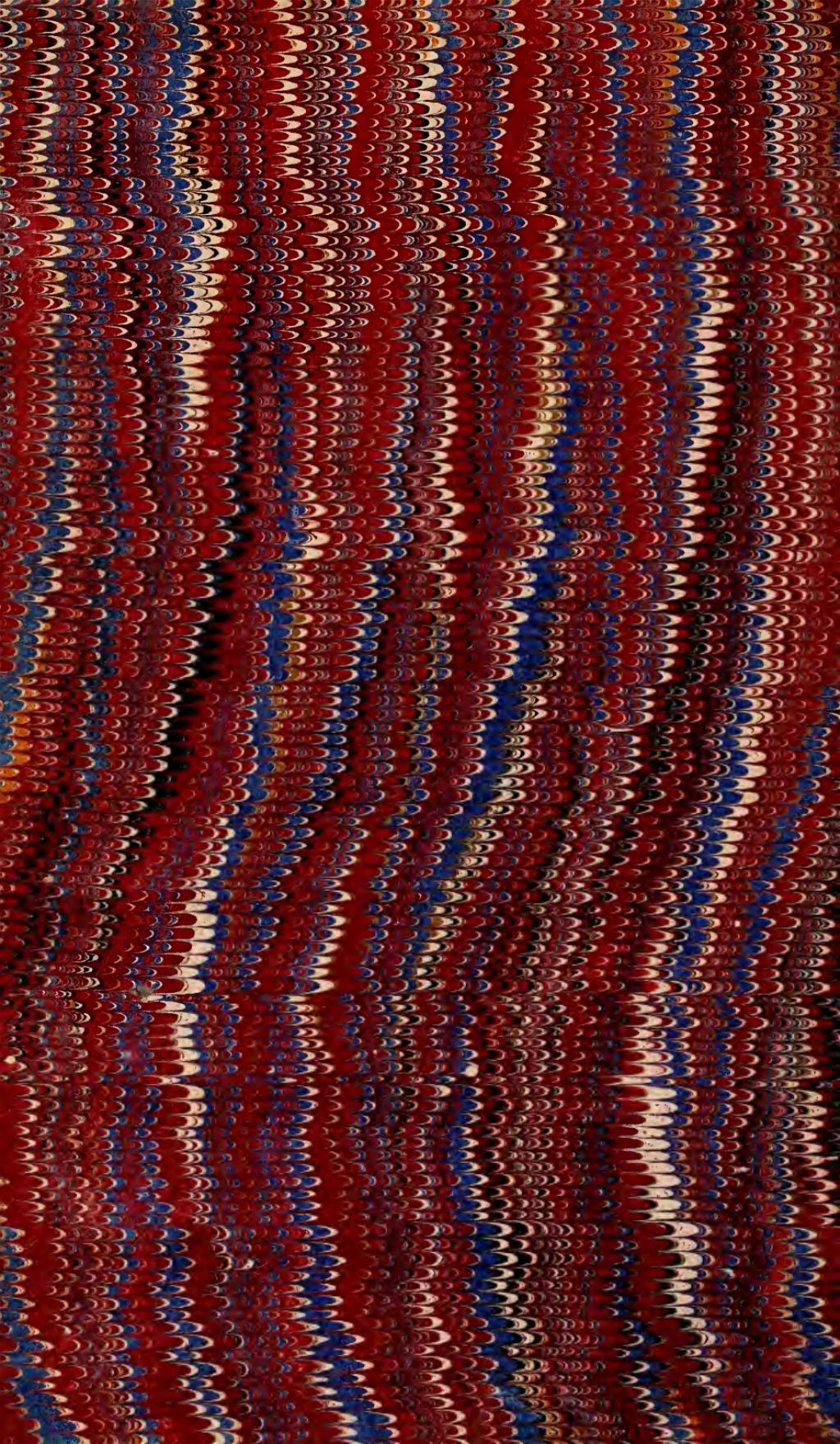
which we ought to feel worse than a wound; and the time has come when every man ought to address himself soberly and seriously to the correction of this great existing evil. I do not undertake to say what the constitution allows Congress to do in the premises. I will only say, that if that great fund of the public domain be, properly and in equity, belonging, as is maintained, to the States themselves, there are some means, by regular and constitutional laws, to enable and induce the States to save their own credit and the credit of the country.

Gentlemen, I have detained you much too long. I have wished to say that, in my judgment, there remain certain important objects to engage our public and private attention, in the national affairs of the country. These are, the settlement of the remaining questions between ourselves and England; the great questions relating to the reciprocity principle; those relating to colonial trade; the most absorbing questions of the currency, and those relating to the great subject of the restitution of the national character and the public faith; these are all objects to which I am willing to devote myself, both in public and in private life. I do not expect that much of public service remains to be done by me; but I am ready, for the promotion of these objects, to act with sober men of any party, and of all parties. I am ready to act with men who are free from that great danger that surrounds all men of all parties,—the danger that patriotism itself, warmed and heated in party contests, will run into partisanship. (Cheers.) I believe that, among the sober men of this country, there is a growing desire for more moderation of party feeling, (cheers,) more predominance of purely public considerations, more honest and general union of well-meaning men of all sides to uphold the institutions of the country and carry them forward. (Cheers.)

In the pursuit of these objects, in public life or in a private station, I am willing to perform the part assigned to me, and to give them, with hearty good-will and zealous effort, all that may remain to me of strength and life.









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